

# Follis Mystery— Clues Lead Only To a Deadend

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## WASHINGTON.

This is a do-it-yourself Eric Ambler mystery story. There are facts galore and false leads and frustrating dead ends. There is a picturesque European setting peopled by characters of sometimes sinister background.

Right now there is no solution and none is in sight. Armchair thriller buffs can write their own last page, which is what scores of people familiar with the case of "The Missing Physician" now are trying to do.

Dr. Richard M. Follis jr., a 56-year-old Washington pathologist employed by the Veterans Administration but on loan to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology for the past 10 years, dropped out of sight in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, two weeks ago today.

Amsterdam police headed by Chief Inspector Piet Landman have maintained from the start that the doctor was intoxicated and on the dark and windy early morning of Sunday, Dec. 5, somehow lost his balance and fell into one of the city's myriad canals.

## CANALS GUARDED

At first Inspector Landman's theory seemed reasonable, although the canals are guarded by hip-high barricades in most places and Dr. Follis, while known to drink occasionally, was described by close friends and his wife, Edith, as a man who never lost physical control of himself.

Now, after 14 days, Amsterdam police have abandoned the idea that Mr. Follis drowned accidentally in one of the canals. If his body still is under water, say the police, the doctor is probably weighted down and thus was murdered.

Several dragging operations in the canals near the Schiller Hotel, where Dr. Follis stayed, turned up no corpse.

So what happened? And where, if not dead (as both British and French intelligence sources mysteriously insist he is), is Dr. Follis?

Interviews with his distraught wife, who lives in Washington, his close friends and colleagues, and people in Amsterdam who claim to have seen him there, results in this timetable of his movements—and many peculiar contradictions.

### Thursday, Dec. 2

4:15 p. m.—Dr. Follis' wife drove him to Washington National Airport where he was to catch a 5 p. m. shuttle flight to New York. Upon leaving the car, the doctor handed his wife his wallet containing all his credit cards and identification (except his official passport) and his keys which he told her to "put away somewhere." He never did this before, his wife said.

8:15 p. m.—He left on a non-stop Pan American Airways jet for Amsterdam which took off from Kennedy International Airport.

### Friday, Dec. 3

8:30 a. m.—Arrived in Amsterdam at Schiphol Airport. (Sometime before he arrived, someone, presumably the doctor himself, asked Pan American to change his reservation at the Schiller from four days to two days and Pan American's office in Amsterdam did so after getting the change from the doctor.)

10-10:30 a. m.—Checked in at the Schiller, went to his room, then left to keep an appointment with Dr. H. A.

Continued

P. C. Oomen, a noted Dutch endocrinologist who lived most of his life in Indonesia, at the Royal Tropical Institute.

12:15 p. m.—He completed a 1½-hour "professional discussion" with Dr. Oomen. The two did not lunch together because, according to Dr. Oomen, the Dutchman had a previous engagement.

8 p. m.—Dr. Follis, according to Amsterdam police, dined at an Indonesian restaurant called the "Kowloon" in the Chinese district. It is not known if he had company at dinner and Amsterdam police will not say.

11-midnight—At a cheap bar called the Victoria a man witnesses say fit Dr. Follis' description began drinking champagne and wine—moderately. There the witnesses say the man met a 48-year-old woman identified as Wally Kramer, who began drinking with him. He spent about \$15 at the Victoria and then the pair went on, according to Mrs. Kramer, to the Amstel Club down the street.

(Mrs. Kramer, said in an interview that the man she was with paid for the drinks with U. S. dollars fastened into a roll "with paper clips" and wrapped in "scientific notes to himself." She estimates he had about \$80 on him.)

Saturday, Dec. 4

1:30 a. m.—The two arrived at the expensive Amstel Club where, says Mrs. Kramer, they went on drinking and discussed such things as his affection for dachshunds (Dr. Follis raises them in Washington) and music.

### 'EXTREMELY DEPRESSED'

"He was extremely depressed from the time I met him in the Victoria," says Mrs. Kramer. "He said he had great troubles and was worried about something having to do with the Far East. I don't know why because he didn't tell me. He paid the orchestra 25 guilders (about \$8) to play operatic music and gypsy music. He got very drunk."

The woman also said that the man she was with "had an abominable tic—a twitching of his lips which was simply awful. Terrible." Dr. Follis' wife and his medical associates say that he had never before exhibited such a tic, even in the slightest degree.

3:30 a. m.—The pair returned to the Schiller and, according to the doorman, the man fitting Dr. Follis' description went alone to his room and the woman with him left in a taxi. Before leaving she handed the doorman a note with her name and address on it. The doorman says he slipped the note into her companion's pocket; the woman says it was never delivered.

2 p. m.—The man left his room (he had ordered drinks sent up during the morning and headed downtown.

2:30 p. m.—C. J. Remiens, the owner of a second-hand jewelry shop says a man who looked like the doctor came in to buy a \$125 diamond solitaire ring and "made a nervous impression on me." He never returned for it and did not say whom it was for.

(What happened from the time the man left the jeweler until midnight Sunday is unknown. The developed film in Dr. Follis' Japanese-made camera shows what Amsterdam police call "museum shots and nothing relevant" but the police are either unwilling or unable to say precisely what of, or where, the photographs were taken.

Midnight—Witnesses at the Schiller say the man who appeared to be Dr. Follis paced the lobby for several minutes "apparently waiting for somebody who didn't show up."

12:30 a. m.—The man visited several bars, say the police, but only G. Oosterlinh, of the Trocadero Bar, admits to having seen a man who looked like the doctor.

2 a. m.—At the Schiller the doorman and reception clerk say that the man they knew as Dr. Follis returned for a brief time (they do not know why or for what) and then left again. "He was very high," said the doorman.

2:30 a. m.—Two workers on their way to the early shift at a factory told police that they saw a man who looked like the doctor walking across Thorbecke Square, about 100 yards from the Schiller. The two were about 40 yards away from the man, the police said. But the police also say: "Dr. Follis had a marked identifying feature which makes his presence a certainty. We cannot, however, reveal it."

Monday, Dec. 6

Noon—Dr. Andreas Querido, of Leiden University, says: "I had cleared my desk waiting for his visit but he didn't come. He was also supposed to call me on Saturday but he never did. I felt that was very unusual as he is known as a most punctual man but I did not call his hotel because I expected him Monday anyway." (They were to discuss a nutrition survey in Ecuador.)

5:30 p. m.—Dr. Querido called Dr. Oomen, with whom he knew Dr. Follis had a Friday appointment, and asked him if Dr. Follis had been there. When Dr. Querido found that the appointment had been kept, he called the U. S. consulate to ask if there had been an accident. The consulate then called the police.

Tuesday, Dec. 14

The Amsterdam police called off the investigation of the Follis case.

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